

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 HAVANA 02321 091939Z  
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 CA-01 FSE-00 L-03 H-02  
NSC-05 HA-05 /037 W  
-----016953 091950Z /70  
P 091850Z AUG 78  
FM USINT HAVANA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2780

UNCLAS HAVANA 2321

EO 11652: NA  
TAGS: CASC CDES CU (MATELLANES, MERCEDES)  
SUBJ: DEATH OF MERCEDES MATELLANES IN CUBA

1. THE DECEASED MERCEDES MATELLANES WAS INTERRED AT 9:30 A.M. 8 AUGUST AT CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS CEMETERY, HAVANA FOLLOWING A SIMPLE, DIGNIFIED, CATHOLIC CEREMONY AT THE CENTRAL CHAPEL OF THE CEMENTERY. USINT CONOFF AND LOCAL EMPLOYEE ATTENDED. HER REMAINS LAID IN STATE AT RIVERO FUNERAL HOME FROM 2:30 P.M. 7 AUGUST UNTIL THEIR REMOVAL TO THE CEMETERY,DURING WHICH TIME THEY WERE BLESSED BY A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

2. PRIOR TO PREPARATION FOR BURIAL THE REMAINS WERE HELD UNDER REFRIGERATION AT THE CUBAN DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL MEDICINE. LAST RIGHTS WERE NOT SAID SUBSEQUENT TO THE ACCIDENT.

3. BURIAL IN CUBA WAS AT THE 2 AUGUST TELEPHONIC INSTRUCTIONS OF MRS. MATELLANES' DAUGHTER, RITA ELGAR. POST PROCEEDED WITH ARRANGEMENTS UPON RECEIPT OF US 100 SCS TRUST DEPOSIT WHICH WAS EXPENDED AS FOLLOWS:  
40 CUBAN PESOS FOR RENTAL OF CRYPT FOR PERIOD OF TWO YEARS,  
30 CUBAN PESOS FOR A FLORAL WREATH.

4. AT ABOUT 7:30 P.M. 8 AUGUST RITA ELGAR CALLED USINT TO ASK  
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THAT HER MOTHER'S REMAINS NOT BE INTERRED IN CUBA BUT RATHER THAT THEY BE REPATRIATED TO THE UNITED STATES. MRS. ELGAR ALLEGED THAT SHE HAD ATTEMPTED IN VAIN TO REACH CONOFF BY PHONE ON EVENING OF 4 AUGUST TO MAKE ABOVE REQUEST AFTER SHE WAS TOLD BY DEPARTMENT THAT HER MOTHER HAD ALREADY BEEN BURIED. USINT TELEPHONE RECORDS REVEAL THAT RITA ELGAR INDEED CALLED POST 4 AUGUST AND ASKED TO SPEAK WITH CONOFF. CALL ANSWERED BY SECURITY GUARD WHO TOLD HER

THAT CONOFF HAD LEFT FOR EVENING. SHE LEFT NO MESSAGE AND SAID SHE WOULD CALL LATER, WHICH SHE NEVER DID. AT NO TIME DID MRS. ELGAR SPEAK WITH USINT DUTY OFFICER AS SHE FURTHER ALLEGES.

5. CUBAN LAW PROVIDES THAT REMAINS, ONCE INTERRED, MUST REMAIN SO FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS PRIOR TO EXHUMATION. USINT DOES NOT INTEND TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION TO SEEK EXHUMATION SINCE IT PROCEEDED WITH BURIAL AT DAUGHTER'S REQUEST.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 09 aug 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Subject:** DEATH OF MERCEDES MATELLANES IN CUBA  
**TAGS:** CASC, CDES, CU, (MATELLANES, MERCEDES)  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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